meeting part of cost of handling, packaging, transport/freight charges has also been introduced by the Government.

A Quality Upgradation Programme has been launched by the Tea Board for improving quality of tea manufactured by small growers in the country.

Tea Marketing (Control) Order 1984 has been modified to remove the condition of obligatory sale of 75% of tea production through public tea auctions. The producers of tea are now free to sell any quantity of tea through public tea auctions.

The sale of tea in the Domestic Tariff Area by 100% Export Oriented Units (EOUs) and units in Export Processing Zones (EPZs) has been banned.

A Generic promotion campaign has been launched for improving the consumption of tea within the country.

Bilateral Trade Agreements

2397. SHRI AIMADUDDIN AHMED KHAN (DURRU): Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the countries with which India has bilateral Trade Agreements;

(b) the broad features of these Agreements; and

(c) the proposals for the near future in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY): (a) India has bilateral Trade Agreements with Angola, Algeria, Australia, Austria, Argentina, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Botswana, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cameroon, China; Cuba, Colombia, Cyprus, DPR Korea, Democratic Republic of Congo (Zaire), Ethiopia, Egypt, European Community, Ghana, Guatemala, Iraq, Iran, Israel, Ivory Coast, Indonesia, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Liberia, Libya, Lao PDR, Mozambique, Mongolia, Mauritius, Malaysia, Myanmar, Morocco, Maldives, Nigeria, Namibia, New Zealand, Nepal, Oman, Peru Portugal, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Seychelles, Syria, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Spain, Tanzania, Trinidad and Tobago,

Thailand, Tunisia, Uganda, Vietnam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and all countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States and Baltic's except Azerbaijan.

(b) the bilateral Trade Agreements broadly provide for Most Favoured Nation treatment on reciprocal basis, co-operation for mutual benefits with a view to expanding trade and strengthening economic co-operation, sympathetic consideration to the representations in connection with the implementation of the agreements, validity of the agreements, trade fairs, exchange of information, Counter-Trade, exchange of business delegation, co-operation in the various spheres on mutual interest, specifying the currency for payment purposes, providing safeguard clauses, creation of forums like Joint Trade Committee to monitor the implementation of Trade Agreements, arrangements for liquidation of the rupee balances through imports from India in case of agreements with specific countries.

(c) The Government proposes to have preferential trading agreements with Colombia, Chile and Venezuela. The negotiations are going on with Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Lebanon, Madagascar, Norway, Nigeria and Togo for Bilateral Trade Agreements.

Balance of trade position

2398. SHRI AIMADUDDIN AHMED KHAN (DURRU): Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the balance of trade position of the country as on date; and

(b) what steps are proposed to be taken by Government to improve the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY): (a) As per the latest provisional data available from Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCI&S), Calcutta, trade balance is placed at US $(-) 6765.89 million during April—February 2001-02.